

## **A RAND NOTE**

**Turkey: Toward the Twenty-First Century**

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## PREFACE

Turkey has experienced great changes in its internal and external environment since its founding as a republic. The purpose of this Note is to discuss the most important trends in Turkey's political, economic, and social development, with particular emphasis on the progress of the last decade and prospects for the future.

The specific work that led to this Note was done in the context of ongoing research on "Turkey's Future Strategic Orientation: Implications for U.S. Interests and Policy," a study sponsored by USAFE, the Air Staff (AF/XOXXE), and the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence (DAMI-FII), Department of the Army. This research was conducted within the Strategy and Doctrine programs of Project AIR FORCE and the Army Research Division's Arroyo Center, two of RAND's federally funded research and development centers. Other research in this series examines the prospects for Turkish relations with the West, Turkey's evolving role in the Middle East and the republics of the former Soviet Union, and Turkey in the Balkans.

## SUMMARY

There is little reason for serious worry about Turkey's ability to maintain an effective political and social system and to make further economic progress during the 1990s. Turkey is able to build on a record of stability and economic accomplishment established during the 1980s. Turks are united on goals: they want accelerated modernization; they want increased international respectability for their country; they want to continue to practice democracy, which they see as the best guarantee for further progress.

Islam in Turkey serves the needs of the society in a constructive fashion. Turkey is not vulnerable to Islamic extremism from abroad. Islamic movements have little influence on Turkish politics, and Islamic-oriented politicians are not likely to gain significant influence in the 1990s. The centrist political philosophies that have dominated the Turkish political spectrum since 1950 will continue to do so during the coming decade, though parties themselves will remain relatively unstable and may fragment and reform. There is a natural center-right majority in Turkish politics, now shared by two competing parties. The center-left is weak, even though the Social Democratic People's Party currently shares responsibility for governing in the Demirel-led coalition.

Turkey's geography and history combine to draw the country toward Europe, toward the Middle East, and now, suddenly, toward the new republics emerging from the wreckage of the Soviet Union, most of which are Muslim and Turkic. Turkey will balance all three orientations during the 1990s while still looking toward the United States as its principal security partner within NATO. Turkey's importance to the West is enhanced because of its potential for helping Americans, Europeans, and others gain access to the newly independent states of the Caucasus and Central Asia. In comparison to the growing significance of Turkey as a channel for political, cultural, and economic access to the entire former Soviet empire (including non-Muslim areas), long-standing rancorous issues such as Cyprus are of secondary importance.

Prospects for economic progress in Turkey remain good, though persistent inflation, growing budget deficits, and the need for privatization of state economic enterprises require serious action. Turkish exports are not likely to stop growing during the 1990s, and foreign investment and invisible earnings (especially from tourism and services) will most likely see rapid increases, as they have in recent years. The country should be able to keep servicing a comparatively high level of long-term foreign indebtedness.

While Turkey will in all likelihood retain a high degree of political and social cohesion and the standing of the military in Turkish society will remain high, military influence on government, barring a major internal crisis, will continue to wane. The share of revenue devoted to military needs will lessen. Revision in the system of compulsory military service is already on the government's action agenda.

Adjustments in the status of Turkey's Kurdish population and, as a result, constitutional revisions that will give all ethnic groups greater opportunity to assert their identity will be one of Turkey's major challenges during the years ahead. The collapse of the Soviet Union is likely to reduce the effectiveness of the Marxist Kurdish guerrilla movement that has confronted Turkey with an increasingly serious problem in recent years.

Though some classic Ataturkist policies have run their course (to the regret of many older Turkish intellectuals), the basic contribution of Ataturk to modern Turkey is intact and its value widely recognized. There is even some prospect that the world will now come to recognize that Ataturk's model would have been far more appropriate for the Third World than Lenin's. If the successor states to the Soviet empire can consolidate their independence after the Turkish example derived from Ataturk, they will be fortunate indeed.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am indebted to many colleagues and friends—Americans, Turks, and others—with whom I have shared travel and research experiences in Turkey over many years. These include my wife, Martha, whose deep association with Turkey and frequent visits there complement my own. I would also like to thank Dr. Heath Lowry, Director of the Institute of Turkish Studies in Washington, D.C., who as an insightful historian and good friend provided many helpful observations in reviewing the first draft of this Note.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Using my reflections on the history of the Turkish republic over the past 70 years, particularly the accomplishments since the military coup of 12 September 1980, I discuss in this Note what I consider to be the most important features of Turkey's development as the country progresses through the 1990s and into the 21st century. I use the verb *progress* intentionally, for Turkey as a nation not only has established a record of accelerated net progress during the past decade, but shows every indication of being able to build on that foundation during the 1990s. In other words, with continued success, Turkey will enter the 21st century as one of the world's most successful and promising medium-sized nations.

The main emphasis in this Note is on internal trends and developments. These must always be the basis for assessing a country's prospects for progress and projecting the course of its relations with the rest of the world. Turkey became much more directly connected with the world during the 1980s. This process will accelerate during the 1990s. As in many other countries, there are people in Turkey who would like to turn inward, escape into some form of isolationism or political or religious extremism. They would like to restrict the impact of the world on their societies and limit processes of development they consider adverse to their interests. Such notions are utopian wherever they are found, and are especially so for a country with Turkey's geography and history. Nevertheless, reactionary forces are so often overdramatized by journalists, superficial researchers, tendentious critics, and apprehensive government officials that they dominate dialogue about Turkey, causing important basic facts and trends to be obscured. If I am accused of giving too little attention to Islamic extremists, Pan-Turkists, sentimental socialists, and political demagogues in the sections that follow, I will not be upset. My purpose is to discuss predominant and characteristic trends and probabilities.

Turkey's geography subjects it to inescapable influences from all sides. The great burst of economic, social, and political development that Turkey experienced during the 1980s has greatly improved its ability to cope successfully with both internal and external forces. Even more important, perhaps, is the fact that Turks have increasingly come to realize that their country need no longer be merely a passive element in international political and economic life. Turkey can influence the world, not only in its own neighborhood, but in more distant regions as well.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union has had a rapid and profound impact on Turkey. For four centuries, the Russian Empire was a constant threat, not only to the



Ottoman Empire, but to the entire world of the Turks stretching from the Balkans deep into China. It absorbed half of all Turks. As an ethnic group, the Turks have proved more vigorous than the Russians. Can they transform that physical vitality into political and economic dynamism? The Turks and Muslims of the former Soviet Union look to Turkey to help them achieve momentum, consolidate their independence, and gain status and respect in the world. Turkey has done it—why can't they? As they respond to the appeals of their Turkic brothers, Turks show little sign of losing sight of Russia and the rest of the Slavic world.

A favorite question of observers who like to cast speculation on international relations in "either-or" terms—Will Turkey choose Europe or the Middle East?—can be expanded to offer a third alternative: the Turkic/Muslim republics of the former Soviet Union, including many so-called "autonomous" republics within the Russian federation. The answer has never been one or the other and is now not one or two of the three. It is "all of the above." These "choices" are not contradictory or competitive, they are complementary. And, as the London *Economist* argued so effectively late last year, it is very much in the interest of a Europe that regards Turkey as an integral component to see Turkey maximize its relations with the Middle East and Central Asia. It is also in the interest of the United States.<sup>1</sup>

I have been studying Turkey for 40 years. I first set foot in the country in 1955 and have made frequent visits ever since, sometimes three or four times a year. For a total of five years divided between the late 1950s and the mid-1970s, I served in the American Embassy in Ankara. Turkey was among several countries for which I was responsible as a staff officer of the National Security Council from 1977 through 1980. I have known many of Turkey's leading politicians, businessmen, and intellectuals. I have undertaken several research projects relating to Turkey since I joined RAND as a resident consultant in 1982. I have worked closely with the Institute of Turkish Studies in Washington, D.C., and have been a trustee of the American Turkish Foundation for almost a decade. I happened to be in Turkey in September and October 1991 and observed the most recent election campaign firsthand. I accompanied a large Turkish-American business and investment mission to Central Asia and Azerbaijan in May–June 1992.<sup>2</sup> I follow the Turkish press as well as most scholarly research relating to Turkey. I am in continual correspondence and frequent personal contact with a broad range of Turkish friends and colleagues.

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<sup>1</sup>Special section, "Turkey, Star of Islam," *Economist*, 14 December 1991.

<sup>2</sup>My report of this mission was distributed by the American Turkish Friendship Council, 1010 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Suite 1020, Washington, D.C. 20005.

I have avoided detailed sourcing in this Note, but I do call attention to writing on little-studied or obscure topics that may not be available to most readers. In a brief bibliography at the end, I list a selection of basic books on modern Turkey.

## 2. SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND POLITICAL TRENDS

### TURKS' EXPECTATIONS

What do Turks want of life? How do they want their country to develop? Where do they expect to be as the 21st century begins?

Most Turks want continued modernization, improvements in the quality of life, and the opportunity to better themselves as a result of education and work. Their aims are those of most Western-oriented societies: more material goods, better educational opportunities for their children, and affordable medical care that will prolong life. Beyond these elementary desires, they want more leisure time to enjoy sports and entertainments, to go to beach and mountain resorts where many are acquiring second homes, and to be able to travel abroad. But few want to emigrate. Many want to work abroad, and most who go to work abroad intend to return. Most do. Those who do not return usually retain ties with relatives and friends and maintain an interest in life at home. By and large, Turks take it for granted that their desires and aspirations can best be satisfied in the framework of an open society and a democratic political system. But they are not purists about democracy. They want close relations with the United States; they want closer integration into Europe; they consider themselves to be part of the Free World and are distressed when Freedom House, as it does in its 1991 assessment of the state of freedom in the world, lists Turkey as only "partly free," along with countries such as Pakistan, Yemen, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, and the Central African Republic.

Most Turks are patriotic. In contrast to what is seen in many Western societies, expressions of patriotism in Turkey are not made apologetically and do not attract ridicule except from a few residual Stalinists on the extreme left and a few religious demagogues on the extreme right. Ataturk's principles continue to be accepted by most Turks as the basis for modern life and the existence of the republic. Turks want their country to be strong, successful, and respected in the world. They expect that its rapidly growing population and economic success will give it greater influence in world affairs in the 21st century. They have no desire for territorial expansion but are increasingly inclined to display a direct interest in the life and welfare of Turkic kinsmen in the Balkans and in Asia. Though the exceptionally high status in Turkish life enjoyed by military men since the founding of the republic has gradually eroded, the prestige of the military profession remains high. For young men to shirk military service is still less than admirable. Turks believe their country must remain militarily powerful, but notions of what constitutes adequate armed forces are now in flux.

The political, economic, and social degeneration experienced in the 1970s remains a vivid memory for Turks. They do not want to see the country fall into disarray again and will accept some degree of economic stringency and moderate restrictions on their freedoms to avoid disorder. They are not, however, inclined to consider a turn to authoritarianism as a cure for difficulties or a means of avoiding trouble. They have faith in democracy, which, for the most part, they enjoy practicing and understand as a system for reconciling conflict and adjusting to change while society moves forward. They are not awed or easily duped by politicians, whom they regard as much less than superhuman. Except for Ataturk and to some degree Inonu, who have been idolized only in retrospect, Turks are not inclined to glorify political leaders or follow them blindly.<sup>1</sup> Nor do they fear or deplore change of leadership—they take it for granted. They have learned, as many newer democracies have not, that politics must be the art of the possible and that successful conduct of government requires bargaining and compromise. If governments do not meet their expectations, Turks are always ready (perhaps too ready) to throw them out and try again. Gradually, but still to a much more limited extent than most Europeans and Americans, Turks have come to expect less of government and think more in terms of private initiative, not only in economic matters, but in many aspects of social and intellectual endeavor as well.

There are exceptions to every generalization I have just made, some of which will be noted in the following sections. They should not be permitted to obscure the fact that in terms of basic cohesion and sense of nationhood, Turkey is comparable to the major nations of Europe and far in advance of most Third World states. Turks possess a high degree of consensus about their society and their republic. The Turkish republic is new and may in some respects be compared to new Third World states. In its early stages, republican Turkey had to grapple with most of the problems of political consolidation and economic development that have confronted the Third World in the mid and late 20th century. But Turkey no longer wants to be judged by Third World standards. It is not part of the Third World.

Turkey contains no large alienated groups of people who are challenging the existence of the state or working to change the prevailing political and economic order.<sup>2</sup> Social classes in Turkey do not have deep historical roots. Class attitudes are not sharp and are not sharpening. Income differentials, however, broadened substantially during the economic

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<sup>1</sup>Adnan Menderes, who was ousted in a military coup in 1960 and hanged after a long trial in 1961, has been rehabilitated in recent years and restored to an honorable place in modern Turkish history.

<sup>2</sup>Kurds? Not yet, at least. Most of Turkey's Kurds are functioning constructively within the framework of the Turkish political and economic system. This situation could, but is not necessarily predestined to, change during the coming decade. Kurds nevertheless represent a serious challenge for Turkey, as is further discussed below.

upsurge of the 1980s, with the result that successful entrepreneurs (some of very modest origin) have indulged in conspicuous consumption and adopted life styles patterned on Western models of affluence. This phenomenon has so far had few political consequences.

Unlike most European countries, Turkey has no significant groups of guest workers or recent immigrants who present an accommodation or assimilation challenge. During the 1990s, Turkey may have to contend with immigration or refugee movements from the Balkans and the southern republics of the former Soviet Union. Turks do not see this possibility as particularly welcome. Therefore, they understand that a good pragmatic reason for helping the newly independent Turkic/Muslim republics is to keep conditions from deteriorating to the point at which large numbers of people want to leave.

Turks are not fearful of the future. In spite of political rhetoric and journalistic exaggeration, there are few Turks who would not admit that they are better off as individuals and as a nation in 1992 than they were in 1980. They expect to have both ups and downs but to nevertheless continue to gain during the remainder of the 1990s. They face the 21st century not with trepidation, but with confidence. All the trends and characteristics outlined above appear more likely than otherwise to persist through the 1990s.

## RELIGION

The great majority of Turks are Muslims in the same way that most Europeans and Americans are Christians. Their religion is an integral part of their culture and significant in an individual's life primarily as a framework for rites of passage. Especially in the countryside and in provincial towns, adherence to Islamic practices is socially important.<sup>3</sup> For most Turks, avoidance or rejection of Islamic behavioral expectations would disrupt the cohesiveness of their social and professional relationships, make daily life uncomfortable, and bring no compensating advantage. Businessmen in Kayseri thus leave their shops to join Friday noon prayers in the mosque in much the same spirit that upstanding citizens in American towns attend Sunday morning church services. Intellectuals who have seldom attended a religious service are buried with religious rites. The inhabitants of a new urban settlement (*gecekondu*) raise money to build a mosque as soon as the settlement is connected to power and water lines. They do so not because they are Islamic fanatics or beset by feelings of alienation, but simply because they feel a need for the structure and symbols of stable life they knew in the village. Highway truckers' stops, roadside shopping centers, and even filling stations have small prayer chapels (*mescits*). Only Western alarmists unfamiliar

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<sup>3</sup>The same is true in the suburbs of all large cities, which are the gateway for passage into urban life and to which people from the villages and country towns transfer their customs and norms.

with the quality and tempo of Turkish life could regard these as a manifestation of Muslim fundamentalism.

The main characteristic of Islam in Turkey is that it is routine. Islamic traditions are an integral ingredient of Turkish history, but they are not an overwhelming aspect of it, as they are for Arabs. The pre-Islamic Central Asian past has as much appeal to Turks as any period in the Islamic era. Like many peoples worldwide, Turks have become increasingly interested in their roots as education has spread and modern media have reached more and more of the population. The heroic Turkic element looms larger than Islam in the Turkish past, but Turks see little conflict between the two.

In addition to terminating the caliphate, Atatürk carried out reforms that corrected obscurantist and degenerate tendencies in Turkish Islam (e.g., he outlawed the dervish orders<sup>4</sup>). Under the relatively authoritarian governments that prevailed for the better part of the first three decades of the Turkish republic, Islam enjoyed no official favor and appeared to be on the defensive. Some classic Atatürkists, rationalist reformers who idealized Western secular society in oversimplified fashion, came close at times to disavowing Islam. Intellectuals of this mentality still sound cries of alarm whenever they perceive religious influences penetrating Turkish political and economic life. Such warnings serve to restrain otherwise moderate politicians from the temptation to engage in demagogic exploitation of religion, but the danger of any virulent form of Islamic resurgence in Turkey during the coming decade is not great.

The opening up of Turkish politics and society that came with the turn to multiparty democracy in 1950 brought what appeared to many to be a resurgence of Islam. The dilemma that classic Atatürkists have had to face ever since—and have not solved—is how can a democratic society suppress religion if a sizable portion of the population considers it important? Since the 1950s, Islam has gradually become normalized as a basic but not predominant element in the pluralist political and social structure. There is no good reason for thinking that it will not continue in this fashion.

Islam in Turkey is not an emotional phenomenon. Turks are not readily stirred by demagogic religious appeals. *There is no significant hierarchical structure in Turkish Islam.* Atatürk destroyed the *ulema* (the class of Islamic religious elders). No traditions of honoring religious personalities or men thought to be especially holy have survived in Turkish society as a whole. Intellectuals' concerns over the past two decades about the retrogressive

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<sup>4</sup>They were driven underground, where they continued to play an important religious role at the popular, or folk, level. With the lifting of official persecution in the 1950s, they again came to the surface and have since been officially regarded as cultural phenomena.

influence of religious schools (*imam-hatip okullari*) on young Turks have proven to be exaggerated. Similar concerns about the negative impact of the teaching of morals (*ahlak*) as a cover for religious instruction in public schools since 1981 have also been overdrawn. Turkish youth shows no evidence of falling victim to religious fanaticism. Most young Turks feel uneasy if complimented for displaying Islamic piety. Young people in Turkey have much the same tastes as European and American youth. Almost any young Turk feels insulted if you tell him he looks, thinks, or behaves like an Arab or an Iranian. Almost all young Turks glow with satisfaction if you tell them they look or act like Americans.

Religious extremism in Iran continues to have no significant impact in Turkey, and there is no prospect that this situation will change. There is no pro-Iranian or pro-Arab political party in Turkey, and none is likely ever to gain significant strength. In Turkish politics, politicized Islam (and Arab and Iranian money) plays a role no greater than that of the Moral Majority and the Unification Church in American political life.

Perennial Islamic political leaders such as Necmettin Erbakan have found appeals to religiosity per se inadequate as a basis for seeking followers and votes; they talk in terms of improving the standard of living, creating jobs through expansion of industry, and increasing earnings from trade with Middle Eastern countries. This economic orientation is evident in the name of Erbakan's current party: *Refah Partisi*—the Welfare Party. The 1982 constitution forbids organization of political parties on the basis of religion, ethnicity, or authoritarian political philosophies. There is little reason to believe that if this restriction is lifted (as it may well be in the 1990s), extremist, including Islamic, parties would flourish.

Increased orientation during the 1990s toward the Islamic republics of the former Soviet Union is unlikely to cause Turkey to become more Islamic in any radical sense, because religious and political attitudes in these republics appear likely to evolve along lines parallel to those of Turkish experience.<sup>5</sup> The appeal of Turkey to the Islamic peoples of the

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<sup>5</sup>It may, of course, be premature to judge how political currents that have proliferated among Muslims in the ex-Soviet Union will develop. Religion was a strong component of underground opposition to communism and Russian domination. The fact that a religious leadership in Iran successfully defied outside powers generated sympathy and a desire for emulation among some Soviet Muslims. For others, puritanical Wahhabi doctrines seemed an effective antidote to the materialism and corruption that became pervasive under Soviet rule. Just how much political force these conservative, austere religious attitudes will have in democratic political life in these newly independent republics remains to be seen. The main preoccupations of their rapidly growing populations are almost all economic—how to overcome the effects of Soviet colonial-style exploitation and degradation of the environment and begin rational agricultural and industrial development. Radical Islamic movements are strong on protest but have not advanced credible agendas for coping with the most serious problems that face ex-Soviet Muslims. The Sufi orders, on the other hand, which steadily gained adherents during the Soviet period, are strong among some of the most progressive elements in these societies. Most of them are not notably conservative. Some, in fact, are dynamically modern in their approach to economic and social issues.

ex-Soviet Union rests in part on shared Turkic blood, language, and traditions, but it gains its most powerful impetus from the example Turkey provides of a successful, prosperous, democratic country in which Islam, modernization, and Westernization have been successfully reconciled. The fact that Turks are Muslims provides a comfortable context for broadened relations; but of the different factors that combine to make Turkey appealing as a model for Tatars, Azeris, and Uzbeks, in pragmatic terms Islam by itself is probably the least important.

There are significant modern currents in Turkish Islam and a potential for further development of modernism. Most third- and fourth-generation urban Turks can be said to practice a modernist form of the Muslim faith, though almost none would articulate his religious behavior in such terms. A widespread movement, the *Nurcular* (followers of Said Nursi) stresses that science, modern knowledge, and serious modern education are as essential a component of Islamic faith as tradition. The movement is considered clandestine and subversive by many Turkish intellectuals, but their judgment may be superficial.<sup>6</sup> The same may be true of the negative attitude of many Turkish intellectuals toward the Sufi brotherhoods—particularly the Naqshbandis—which, as in the ex-Soviet Union and many other parts of the Islamic world, are influential (in Turkey's case, especially in the east and in provincial towns). In many respects, they appear to function in much the same way as Freemasons and other similar fraternities in Christian countries. They are not obscurantist or backward-looking. Nevertheless, too little is known about them. They merit dispassionate study.<sup>7</sup>

#### THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY IN TURKISH GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY

The Turkish republic came into being as the result of a military-led rebellion against a remnant Ottoman government and military resistance to foreign intervention in both the east and the west of the country. The republic's founder, Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk), was a well-trained and battle-hardened professional military man, as were most of his close associates. They did not govern, however, as a military junta. In contrast to most recent Third World leaders, Ataturk observed a clear distinction between military and civilian government. On becoming president, he took off his uniform, never put it on again, and insisted that all his associates who held civilian government posts do the same. He

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<sup>6</sup>For a recent study of this movement by a Turkish academic specialist, see Serif Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey, the Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1989.

<sup>7</sup>The Naqshbandi order, which includes politicians and businessmen as adherents, provides a natural medium for contacts with the emerging entrepreneurial classes of the newly independent Turkic republics of the ex-Soviet Union.



established the principle that Turkish military leaders act as trustees of parliamentary government but intervene only if parliamentary processes degenerate or become deadlocked.

Ataturk had autocratic tendencies and habits, but these were consciously and effectively moderated by his deep admiration for Western civilization and his firm commitment to the establishment of a European-type parliamentary system of government in Turkey. He did not succeed in establishing a working multiparty system, but he created the groundwork on which Inonu could turn this ideal into reality. Ataturk's reforms, though incompletely implemented in his lifetime, laid the basis for evolution toward an open, pluralist, secular society in which military forces have a clearly defined, limited role. Ataturk's principles have served Turkey well and have ensured a degree of stability unusual among new states.<sup>8</sup>

Six of the Turkish republic's eight presidents have been former military men. The Turks' conviction that having a military man as president best ensures the stability and security of the state and guarantees continuation of Ataturk's principles was reinforced after the civilian-led Bayar-Menderes government deteriorated and was brought to an end with a coup led by colonels in May 1960. Two generals and one admiral followed as presidents during the next 20 years. The last, Admiral Fahri Koruturk, proved to be a weak president, hesitant to invest his prestige and authority in efforts to stem the political and economic deterioration and combat the terrorism that engulfed the country during the 1970s as coalition governments led by quarrelsome politicians succeeded one another.<sup>9</sup> General Kenan Evren, the chief of staff who led the junta that took power on 12 September 1980, was in effect president for the next nine years, serving as interim head of state until he was elected president concurrently with the referendum that approved a new constitution in November 1982.

The military takeover in September 1980 was the third military intervention into the democratic political process in two decades. Each was different in character. In 1960,

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<sup>8</sup>Turkey is both a new and an old state. The Turkish republic was juridically the successor to the Ottoman Empire, but it also represented a sharp break with the principles of governance that prevailed in the empire. The Ottoman Empire was not a national state. It was multinational and multireligious, with clearly defined provisions for association of non-Muslims and non-Turks with the state. The sultans combined secular and religious authority. The empire was an autocracy that began to develop representative institutions only during its final decades. The Republic of Turkey was launched as, and has remained, a secular national state in which civil authorities have no religious status. In contrast to U.S. practice (but in keeping with the practice of many European countries), the Turkish government takes responsibility for administering portions of the country's religious establishment.

<sup>9</sup>Koruturk stepped down when his term expired in April 1980. Adhering to strict legality, he made no effort to influence Turkish government or political life thereafter. The deadlock that ensued as parliament proved unable to elect a new president continued until September 1980, when the military leadership, constituting itself as a national security council, intervened in a bloodless coup to break it.

colonels deposed the Bayar-Menderes government by direct action. In 1971, mounting terrorism led the senior military leaders to mount a "coup by memorandum" that forced Prime Minister Demirel to resign and permitted the organization of an above-parties government. In 1980, the country's five top military leaders took power after both repeated warnings to politicians and careful planning.

Following the pattern of the two previous interventions, the military leaders maintained the structure of civilian government in 1980 and immediately disavowed any desire to remain in power. They committed themselves to an orderly process of political reform and restoration of representative government. Hoping to do a more thorough job of correcting shortcomings in the political system than had been done in 1960 or 1971, Evren and his colleagues took three years to complete the transition that (quite unexpectedly to them) brought Turgut Ozal to the prime ministry in October 1983.

This three-year process, though systematic, well-intentioned, open, and humane, was less than fully successful in terms of the goals with which it had been undertaken. In other respects, it succeeded beyond the generals' expectations. The 1982 constitution includes much detail that would better have been left to legislation. Thus, in some respects it has proven too rigid. The commendable desire of the military leadership to create an electoral and political party system that would discourage a multiplicity of small parties and preclude weak coalition governments was amateurishly implemented. Aiming for a two-party system, the generals created a center-right and a center-left party by rather arbitrary procedures. Much of the population regarded both as hollow fronts, and Ozal's Motherland Party, organized over a good deal of obstruction by the military, swept the October 1983 elections. The Ozal era, which continued with Ozal's election as Turkey's second civilian president on 31 October 1989, culminated—and may in a sense have come to an end—when his rival, veteran politician Suleyman Demirel, captured the prime ministry in the elections of October 1991. The two now share leadership responsibility, but not, however, in the sense of being equal partners. Constitutionally, real power rests with the prime minister, i.e., Demirel.

Demirel was twice ousted from the prime ministry by the military (1971 and 1980). Until the very eve of the 1983 elections, Evren attempted to discourage voters from choosing Ozal. To their credit, neither man afterward let resentment prevail. They cooperated for the benefit of the country during the ensuing six years. Demirel became an increasingly open critic of military influence on politics during the 1980s. In their avoidance of a subservient relationship with the military, both Ozal and Demirel moved in tandem with the evolution of the attitudes of most Turks. Military leaders themselves showed no disposition to interfere in politics during the 1980s. Junior officers in too close relations with political and religious

extremists were summarily dismissed from service. When generals disagreed with government positions, they did not attempt to take their case to the public. As the Iraq-Kuwait crisis mounted in the fall of 1990, General Necip Torumtay, chief of staff, suddenly resigned over an apparent policy conflict with President Ozal. The resignation was handled with discretion by both parties, and the substance of their disagreement has never been revealed.

The Turkish military services continue to adhere to a rigid system of up and/or out that ensures a steady flow of new blood into senior military positions. Professional training is of high quality and includes indoctrination in the nature of civilian-military relationships. Turkish military academies are not infected with politics. Close association with the armed forces of other NATO countries and participation in NATO headquarters and regional commands (assignments that all Turkish officers experience at some point as they move up the career ladder) help inculcate understanding of the desirability of subordination of military forces to civilian authority. There is thus little likelihood that Turkish military leaders or any significant group of junior officers will develop political ambitions during the 1990s.

A military career used to be considered a lifetime commitment in Turkey. Professional military officers maintained high standards of integrity and in return were assured emoluments and privileges that gave them elite status and compensated for long years of service in isolated locations that required substantial sacrifices by them and their families. During the past 25 years, change has set in. Military professionals need, and receive, good technical education. They are required to learn foreign languages, study management, and master the skills of the electronic age. Military service used to offer men of modest background unique career opportunities. As the Turkish economy has expanded, many other career possibilities have opened up, for Turkish society has always been open to talent. More and more Turkish officers and professional enlisted men now regard military service as a stage on the way to a subsequent civilian career. The turnover among military professionals is much greater than it used to be. On retirement, senior officers frequently join industry or business. As the Turkish military services have become more open and have interrelated with the society in ways that are normal in modern democratic states, they have lost the aura of special status.

For many years now, universal military service has made more manpower available to the Turkish armed services than can be effectively utilized. Continued high population growth and improvements in health have come to make universal military service a burden for the defense establishment rather than an advantage. The term of required military

service has been steadily reduced. The collapse of the Soviet Union confronts Turkish military leaders with the necessity of reviewing and revising the concepts that have dominated their manpower thinking for decades. Siphoning lower-quality draftees off into service in the national rural police force (*Jandarma*) is no longer an efficient solution to either the surplus manpower problem or the requirements of rural policing. Turks regret losing the sense of national commitment and pride that comes from putting all young men through military training in which they get to know regions of the country formerly unfamiliar to them. As in many other countries, the possibility of broadening universal military service into a system of national service for a variety of other purposes will need to be considered and may lead to important changes in the 1990s.

The Turkish defense establishment has maintained a priority claim on Turkey's budgetary resources. That claim has been both longer-standing and proportionately larger than the defense establishment claim of any other NATO country. Other demands on available revenue (along with declining foreign assistance) have been bringing military planners under increasing pressure for several years. Patriotism and the commitment to national defense unquestioningly supported by most of the public have enabled the Turkish military to build up modern defense industries, including the manufacture of fighter aircraft, that are bound, given the changes of the past three years in Eastern Europe and the fragmentation of the Soviet military establishment, to come under scrutiny. Is further development of the military industry an effective expenditure of the country's resources? Turkish generals and admirals are going to have increasing difficulty competing with civilian demands for resources, not only for defense industries, but also for the maintenance of large, general-purpose armed forces—unless an unstable security environment around Turkey requires continued levels of military readiness. Adjustment to the changing strategic environment is one of the highest priority tasks for the Turkish military in the 1990s. It will need to be accomplished on the basis of realistic estimates of the purposes Turkey's defense establishment serves.

## CYPRUS

Preservation of Turkey's position in Cyprus may still rank among Turkish Ministry of Defense priorities, but it is an anachronistic requirement. Politically, though not economically, Cyprus is likely to continue to stagnate during the 1990s and is more deserving of benign neglect than priority peacemaking efforts on the part of Western governments.

In Turkey as well as in Greece, Cyprus has become a politically marginal issue. The status of the island does not affect any vital interest of either country. Nevertheless, the

issue is still sufficiently emotionally charged (though the emotional temperature has fallen in both countries) that any national politician can be harmed by appearing to be soft on it. It is thus unwise for any Turkish or Greek politician to accede to or advocate concessions toward a permanent settlement on Cyprus that domestic rivals can use against him. There is, unfortunately, every prospect that this situation will continue to prevail throughout the coming decade.

None of the parties involved—Greece, Turkey, the Turks in Cyprus, and the Greeks in Cyprus—is sufficiently disadvantaged by the present status of Cyprus to feel compelled to make any serious concessions to bring about a settlement. All wish to exploit whatever international attention the Cyprus issue can attract for parochial advantage. Cyprus costs Greece nothing, since Greek Cyprus pays its own way and Greeks in Cyprus enjoy a higher average standard of living than do Greeks in Greece. Turkish Cyprus continues to scrape by economically. Without subsidies in various forms from Turkey, some of which come through Turkish occupation forces, the standard of living might fall. But Turkish Cyprus, with a smaller population than all but one or two of Turkey's 71 provinces, does not constitute so great a financial burden that Turkey cannot afford to shoulder it indefinitely.<sup>10</sup>

The United States has no strategic interest in Cyprus. U.S. commercial and political interests are not seriously affected by its divided status. The prime U.S. concern about Cyprus, which has always been derivative of more fundamental U.S. interests, has been that the island not be a source of contention and potential armed conflict between Greece and Turkey and attract intervention from the Soviet Union. The latter part of this concern is no longer relevant. And it is difficult to conceive how either Turkey or Greece could find it in its interest to take military action against the other over Cyprus. The relationship of both countries to the European community precludes unilateral action.

Turkey had fallen into a passive stance on Cyprus by 1974. The Greek colonels abetted a coup against Archbishop Makarios by Cypriot ultraconservatives and triggered Turkish intervention that resulted in occupation of the northern third of the island. Ecevit had tried to persuade Britain to exercise its treaty rights to avoid Turkish military action, but he was unsuccessful. The Cyprus situation has been essentially frozen ever since.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>When Ozal recently broke the long-held taboo by stating that the Turkish presence in Cyprus was costing the Turkish taxpayers over \$200 million per annum, some commentators did in fact begin to suggest that the price was too high and unnecessarily diverted funds needed elsewhere.

<sup>11</sup>For a comprehensive analysis of these events, see Paul B. Henze, "Turkey, the Alliance and the Middle East," Working Paper No. 36, Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., December 1981.

Deep-seated European and American public attitudes will probably always allow Greece and Greek Cypriots to be seen as injured parties while Turkey and Turkish Cypriots are regarded as the instigators of the Cyprus problem. Turkey's maintenance of a comparatively large contingent of troops on the island works in its disfavor. Even if European and American pressure on Turkey were successful in bringing about a major reduction or withdrawal of Turkish forces, restoration of a bicommunal system of government in a "united" Cyprus would probably still prove impossible to negotiate—if, indeed, it is actually desirable. Like Kashmir, which has remained a source of contention and periodic conflict between India and Pakistan for more than 40 years, Cyprus could continue indefinitely in its present partitioned condition. Unlike Kashmir, its condition has led to no armed clashes or miniwars. No lives have been lost in Cyprus since 1974.

#### POPULATION

During the 69 years of the republic, Turkey's population has grown from an estimated 12 million in 1923<sup>12</sup> to almost 58 million at the beginning of 1992. The final results of the October 1990 census revealed a population of 56,664,458, an increase of 5,808,577 compared to five years earlier and 11,736,078 compared to ten years earlier. Turkey has been adding well over a million people to its population every year and seems likely to go on doing so well into the 21st century. The World Bank projects a population of 68 million by the year 2000 and 92 million by 2025. These may prove to be conservative expectations. While birth rates have remained well above 2 percent since 1970, the death rate has been declining slowly and infant mortality has fallen sharply during the past decade. Thus, net growth has remained high. Overall life expectancy reached 66 in 1990. The urban population grew at an annual rate of 6 percent during the 1980s. Urbanization reached 60 percent in 1990. Rapid urbanization has so far had only a limited effect on the national birth rate. No sharp decline is to be expected during the current decade. High and steady population growth necessitates high rates of economic growth to sustain the demand for expanded education, health, and social services and to provide employment for an ever-expanding labor force. The economic reforms of the early 1980s improved the capacity of the country to meet these requirements, but the return to the economy from investing in productive-labor training of a continually growing population comes slowly. Though a reduced rate of population growth is not a high priority with Turkish governments or with the public, changes in this perspective may develop during the 1990s. Growth rates among Kurds have been much higher than among

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<sup>12</sup>The first republican census in 1927 counted 13,648,000 within borders that did not include the Hatay, ceded by France from its Syrian mandate in 1939.

the basic Turkish population, but as rural Kurds of the southeast adapt to urban conditions in Turkish cities, high rates of reproduction may decline. The process takes considerable time—perhaps as much as a generation—to set in, however.

## THE ECONOMY

Turkey's economic performance since 1980 has been impressive, though all aspects of policy have not been uniformly successful. GNP growth averaged 5 percent per year for the 1980s, with 1990 topping the decade with almost 10 percent. Growth fell almost to zero in 1991 but is expected to top 5 percent in 1992. The 1991 drop resulted in large part from income losses and direct and indirect costs to Turkey as a consequence of the Gulf War. Calculated on the basis of the annual import exchange rate of the U.S. dollar, per capita GNP rose from \$1,287 to \$2,595 during the decade; calculated according to the OECD purchasing-power parity formula, it rose from \$2,482 to almost \$5,000. The share of agriculture in the GNP declined steadily from 22.6 percent in 1980 to 16.3 percent in 1991. Industry accounted for 27.7 percent of GNP in 1991, services for 55.9 percent. Turkey has long since ceased to be mainly a producer of primary agricultural produce.

Economic policy since 1980 has emphasized decontrol and openness, realistic exchange rates that have brought Turkish currency to practical convertibility, encouragement of exports and decontrol of imports, competitiveness in world markets (and consequently improved quality and productivity in industry), and privatization. After a long history of stubborn adherence to unrealistic exchange rates that drove much of the country's most productive economic activity underground during the 1970s, deprived the government of revenue, and distorted economic priorities, a realistic exchange-rate policy, with adjustments often occurring daily, has been in effect since 1980.

Exports totaled only \$2,910 million in 1980, with agricultural products constituting 57 percent. Exports rose to \$13,598 million in 1991 (an increase of 367 percent in nominal terms), with agriculture's share falling to 19.7 percent. Turkey was strikingly successful in becoming an exporter of industrial goods during the 1980s. The current balance between agricultural and industrial exports may not change sharply during the 1990s, for Turkey retains a potential for increased food exports to hungry neighbors. Turkey essentially meets its own food requirements (not an insignificant accomplishment for a country whose population is increasing by more than a million each year) and yet still has a substantial potential for increased agricultural productivity. By far the largest part of the steady increase in exports will continue to be provided by Turkish industry. Turkey can expect to be earning at least \$25 billion annually from exports by 2000.

Turkey's imports rose from \$7,909 million in 1980 to \$21,032 million in 1991, a rate of increase of 166 percent, which is well below the rate of increase of exports. Since Turkey imports very little food or other agricultural products (only 4 percent of total imports in 1991), the major portion of Turkish imports consists not of consumption goods, but of inputs into Turkish industry and the economic infrastructure. Energy imports (petroleum and coal) accounted for 17.8 percent of imports in 1991.

These statistics show a basically healthy economy and positive trends. So do comparisons of invisible earnings for the decade. Tourism has grown from a marginal industry to a major earner of foreign exchange: it earned a net balance of \$212 million in 1980, \$2,705 million in 1990, and \$2,062 million in 1991 (down because of the Gulf War). Tourism income is reported to be rising sharply in 1992, and tourism's earning potential is far from realized. Remittances from Turkish workers abroad were all that enabled the country to maintain a precariously positive balance of payments in the 1970s; they continue to be important but not crucial, having risen from \$1,789 million in 1980 to \$3,246 million in 1990 and declining to \$2,819 million in 1991. Turkish contractors have continued to earn well from construction projects abroad. Whereas Turkish construction projects were concentrated in the Middle East at the beginning of the decade, a substantial diversification occurred by the end of the 1980s, with Turkish contractors building hotels in the Soviet Union and German-financed housing for troops returning from the former East Germany and Eastern Europe.

Turkish contractors, traders, and industrialists are now energetically exploring opportunities in the newly independent ex-Soviet republics (including the non-Muslim ones), and new contracts, investment agreements, and trade arrangements are being made weekly. The Turkish Export-Import Bank, organized in 1989 on the American pattern, provides credit and investment guarantees for much of this activity. It is too early to assess how far Turkish economic involvement in the former Soviet republics will go, but it is conceivable that by 2000 a substantial share of Turkish trade, business activity, and foreign investment may be taking place in the Caucasus, Central Asia, Ukraine, and Russia itself. Turkey, with its ready access to the new Muslim nations, may also serve as a convenient partner and base for American, European, and Japanese investors interested in these countries. Some exploratory projects are already being undertaken, but it is too early to assess prospects.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>The *Economist's* special section, "Turkey, Star of Islam," 14 December 1991, makes a good case for utilization of Turkey as a base for business with the Middle East and the former Soviet areas. Its advice is to "look eastward, Europe, and see why you need a successful Turkey."



The downside of Turkey's economic success can be summed up under four headings: persistent high inflation, slowness in privatization, widening budget deficits, and mounting external debt. The first three are closely interrelated; the last is not unrelated to the rest but is not particularly serious as long as the Turkish economy continues to expand and debts can be serviced.

Inflation proved intractable during the 1980s. The most convenient measure of it is the exchange rate for the Turkish lira vis-a-vis the U.S. dollar: it rose from less than 100 in 1980 to more than 7,000 by late 1992. Nevertheless, Turks have learned to live with inflation with surprising ease. Elaborate indexing arrangements have mitigated its effects. The Demirel-led government, which took office at the end of 1991, committed itself to reducing the rate of inflation to 10 to 15 percent by 1993. As of late 1992, there is little to give credence to an expectation that Demirel will succeed in taking the harsh measures required to reduce inflation that no government during the 1980s was ready to resort to. Prospects for the 1990s are for perhaps some reduction, but continuation of inflation at a rate well above the OECD average is likely.

Inflation was fed by the high priority the government gave to expansion of infrastructure during the 1980s. Highways were extended, other forms of transport improved, communications modernized and expanded, and the countryside electrified. The enormous Southeast Anatolia Project (Turkish initials: GAP) was launched in 1981, centered on the construction of the Ataturk Dam on the Euphrates, and is now nearing completion. Though it has had little international publicity, in scope and effect it is more significant than Egypt's Aswan Dam. It has been financed primarily out of Turkey's own resources.

Inflation has also been fed by government subsidies to state economic enterprises, which still represent a major segment of the Turkish economy. If repeated policy declarations, public discussion, and numerous studies by private groups and official commissions could bring about privatization, Turkey would have disposed of most of its state-owned industrial operations, mines, and transport organizations by now. Very few have been privatized. They continue to skew utilization of budgetary resources and the direction of development in important sectors of the economy. In this area, too, the Demirel-led coalition has promised rapid progress. Without drastic action provoked by economic crisis, however, privatization may continue to prove difficult.

Demirel's promises provoke skepticism, especially in light of his record as a compromiser on difficult political and economic decisions. Nevertheless, he may be forced to take bold action to reduce budget deficits that have been soaring during the past five years, reaching an all-time high in 1991. Turkey's tax system underwent some modernization

during the 1980s, e.g., the introduction of the value-added tax (VAT) in the middle of the decade. But tax collection is still far from efficient, the VAT is often evaded, and upper-income earners pay a proportionately smaller share of their income in taxes than do comparable groups in Europe and the United States.

None of Turkey's economic problems has been serious enough to discourage foreign investment, which has risen sharply during the past three years and promises to continue rising during the rest of the 1990s. After a disappointing beginning (average of less than \$100 million a year until 1988), net foreign investment reached \$663 million in 1989, \$700 million in 1990, and \$783 million in 1991. The total for the decade of the 1980s was \$2,369 million. Turkey's economic problems have not been adversely affected. In view of its record of accomplishment during recent years, its high economic momentum, and its good debt servicing performance, Turkey has had no serious difficulty borrowing on the international market. Medium- and long-term foreign debt reached \$40,003 million in 1991; short-term debt reached \$9,117 million. Turkey ran a modest positive current-account balance of payments in 1991 and appears likely to continue to do so, which means it should be able to service its foreign indebtedness without difficulty well into the 1990s.

#### **POLITICS AND POLITICIANS—THE VITAL CENTER**

Turks love competitive party politics. The electorate was ready for party competition when the multiparty system was introduced in 1946, and it demonstrated a clear understanding of political choice when the long-dominant Republican People's Party was turned out of office in 1950. Politics vies with football as the favorite form of entertainment for the average Turkish male, though women have become increasingly active in politics as well. Voter participation rates are high. They have never fallen below 64 percent in national elections since 1961. They rose to an all-time high of 93.3 percent in 1987.

To most outsiders and many Turks, Turkish political life looks disorderly, sometimes almost hopelessly so. Multiparty democracy in Turkey means a multiplicity of parties that are continually fragmenting and re-forming and large numbers of politicians whose loyalty to their parties is often far less intense than their desire to hold office. Politicians cross party lines, majorities are short-lived, coalitions are fragile, and politicians appear to take an opportunistic view of the national interest while extracting maximum personal advantage from their time in office. This view is to some extent true, but it is also too crass and superficial. Beneath the surface, remarkably stable characteristics have persisted in Turkish political life.

In reality, the Turkish political spectrum has always consisted of a moderate-right and a moderate-left represented by two to four parties occupying most of the center, along with a variety of smaller parties, some extremist, some merely maverick. The table below demonstrates the dominance of the major centrist parties from 1950 to the present.

The center has never been evenly divided. Except in the 1970s, when the Republican People's Party under Ecevit enjoyed a peak of popularity, the center-right has ordinarily gained a large margin of votes over the center-left. Even when most popular, Ecevit was unable to gain a majority, peaking at 41.3 percent of the total vote in the 1977 national elections. Demirel's Justice Party gained a clear majority of the popular vote in 1965 and came close to repeating that accomplishment in 1969. Compared to his popularity in the 1960s, Demirel's showing of 27.5 percent of the popular vote in October 1991 was rather poor. Ozal's first victory was his greatest but did not constitute a majority: 45.2 percent in 1983. His Motherland Party gained *only* 36.3 percent in 1987<sup>14</sup> and, under the leadership of Mesut Yilmaz, fell to 24.0 percent in 1991.

Analysis of votes cast provides a good measure of the attitudes and temper of the Turkish electorate. Popular votes reveal much less about parliamentary composition and parliamentary strength of parties, for the voting system has changed from almost pure

#### Strength of Turkish Political Parties

Election Year	Percentage of Votes Received in National Elections	
	Major Centrist Parties	Minor Parties
1950	92.6	7.4
1954	91.4	8.5
1957	87.9	12.1
1961	73.0	27.0
1965	81.6	18.4
1969	73.9	26.1
1973	75.0	25.0
1977	80.1	19.9
1983	98.9	1.1
1987	88.7	11.3
1991	83.0	17.0

<sup>14</sup>Nevertheless, the features of the 1982 constitution that were designed to discourage party fragmentation and reward winners translated this vote into an absolute majority in Parliament. Eventually, the fact that the parliamentary majority did not reflect the distribution of opinion in the electorate worked to the disadvantage of the Motherland Party, as became clear in 1991.

proportional representation in the 1960s to proportional representation sharply modified by a barrier system since 1983. Given the tendency of dissident groups to break off from both the major center-right and center-left parties, clear parliamentary majorities have been exceptional in Turkey. Demirel was able to form a single-party government after 1965, Ozal after 1983. No party was able to come close to that goal during the 1970s, a period during which coalitions in Turkey reached their nadir of effectiveness. The current decade has begun inauspiciously, but a coalition or unification of the two competing center-right parties—Demirel's True Path and Ozal's Motherland Party, now led by Yilmaz—could bring about a return to stable majority government. Together these parties attracted more than 50 percent of the vote in October 1991. There is very little difference in their platforms, far less than between either platform and that of the Social Democratic People's Party, which is led by Inonu, Demirel's current junior partner in governing, and which gained only 20.5 percent of the vote in the 1991 election. Though inherently precarious, the Demirel-Inonu coalition proved remarkably durable during its first months in office. During the fall of 1992, it came under serious strain as a result of defections from Inonu's party.

The reforms the military junta oversaw during the early 1980s were designed to prevent a repetition of opportunistic, indecisive, fragile coalition governments. In pursuing this aim, the military leaders had broad public consensus behind them. They saw in the strong center of the Turkish political spectrum a natural basis for a two-party system. They rejected single-member, winner-take-all parliamentary constituencies, believing instead that they could achieve the desired result by modifying proportional representation and setting up a barrier that required a party to gain a certain percentage of votes cast to qualify for parliamentary seats. The generals also hoped to attract a new generation of more-responsible leaders to politics by prohibiting political leaders judged to be at fault for the 1970s deterioration in Turkish politics from standing for office for a certain time.

Neither aim was achieved in the 1980s. By the beginning of the 1990s, the Turkish political spectrum was even more fragmented than it had been in the 1970s, because the dominant center-right was divided in two and the center-left was even more deeply divided. The division between the two center-left parties that competed in the October 1991 elections proved to be less serious, however, because Ecevit's Democratic Left Party attracted so little support (only 11 percent of votes cast) that neither Inonu nor the center-right parties consider it a serious political competitor. The cleavages within Inonu's Social Democratic People's Party brought it close to fragmentation on several occasions from 1988 onward, and it has faced repeated internal crises even though it has formed part of the government since the end of 1991. Personal rivalries and fundamental ideological strains will almost certainly

cause the Social Democrats—and the center-left in general—to undergo a realignment during the next few years. The center-left in Turkey has never been able to devise an agenda attractive to a majority of the electorate.

### **POLITICS—THE EXTREMES**

Right and left extremist groups have usually attracted only a small proportion of votes cast and never more than 20 percent combined. The religious and ultranationalist rightist parties reached a peak of appeal with 15.3 percent of the vote in 1973 and 14.9 percent in 1977. An electoral coalition of rightist and special-interest parties attracted 16.5 percent of the vote in the 1991 elections but has since broken up.

Though an extremist political movement has never come close to attaining power in Turkey (and extremist leaders have exercised direct influence on the governing process only when they have been able to exploit their status in weak coalitions), Turkish intellectuals are chronically concerned about the threat of rightist reaction—whether nationalistic, religious, or some combination of both. These concerns make good copy for foreign journalists. Intellectuals will continue to fret, and journalists will go on writing stories about the threat of political reactionaries through the 1990s. Worries will be fed by fears of contamination from neo-authoritarian, religious, and Pan-Turkist<sup>15</sup> movements in the former Soviet republics.<sup>16</sup> Far-leftists, out of frustration over the collapse of “socialism” in the Soviet empire, will feed these fears. Massaging of this problem serves at least one positive purpose in Turkey: it helps insulate the public and the political process from susceptibility to even mild forms of demagogic reactionary appeal.

For almost the entire history of the Turkish republic, the Communist Party has been illegal. It came closest to gaining a very modest measure of intellectual respect during the late 1980s, when the argument that a country required a communist party to demonstrate its commitment to full democracy gained currency and Turkish communist leaders returned to Turkey to challenge the ban on them directly. The collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and a number of other countries, the decline of communist parties in all Western countries where they had strength, the cessation of Soviet subsidies for communist parties, and the revelation of the corruption, dishonesty, prejudice, arrogance, and incompetence that characterized communism in the Soviet workers’ paradise—all of these factors, along with

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<sup>15</sup>Why Pan-Turkism should have acquired the reputation in the 20th century of an evil, “fascist” movement, while Pan-Arabism and Pan-Africanism have enjoyed wide favor as liberal, “progressive” concepts, deserves more incisive analysis than it has received.

<sup>16</sup>Extreme political movements have proved slow to develop in the ex-Soviet republics and are not widely regarded as an immediate danger. The likelihood that such movements will have feedback influence on Turkey seems fanciful.

communism's identification with oppressive gerontocracy in China, have left arguments for tolerance of communism in Turkey hollow and have reduced the (never great) appeal of communism and leftist authoritarianism to the electorate almost to zero. The Marxist intellectual and erstwhile terrorist, Dogu Perincek, was able to attract around 3 percent of the vote in the October 1991 elections with an amusingly anachronistic Stalinist appeal. It is difficult to envision how leftist extremists could become a political force of any consequence in Turkey during the 1990s, for the overwhelming majority of Turks will be further insulated from the fascism of the left by continual awareness of, and close involvement with, developments in the former Soviet Muslim republics, where communism is likely to remain in disrepute.

### 3. NEW CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

#### KURDISH QUESTIONS

Perhaps the greatest single challenge Turkey must face in the 1990s is to find ways to successfully adjust its policies toward its Kurdish population. The classic Atatürkist position, that Christians have official minority status but Muslims cannot be regarded as minorities and are not entitled to recognition, has run its course. The republican approach has actually been an extension of the Ottoman principle that Islam takes precedence over nationality among Muslims and has always been contradictory to the basic nationalist emphasis on Turkishness and de-emphasis on religion in the Turkish republic.

The Kurdish issue has suffered in recent years from a great deal of oversimplification by Kurdish activists and their supporters who have replaced a complex and controversial history with a body of mythology, and by journalists who know little of the social conditions or political past of this part of the world. Kurds are demonstrably one of the more ancient peoples of the Middle East. In comparison to them, Turks are relative newcomers, having entered Anatolia, in political terms, with the Battle of Manzikert in 1071, only five years after the Norman conquest of Britain.<sup>1</sup> Kurds for the last 2,000 years have played off the empires to their east—the Persians—against those to the west—first the Romans and the Byzantines and then their Ottoman successors.

Kurds played a larger role than ethnic Turks in the tragic ethnic turmoil in the entire Ottoman-Persian-Caucasian border area during the late 19th and first quarter of the 20th century. The losers were the Armenian and Assyrian (Nestorian) communities that had also existed in this region since ancient times and to whose presence only a few ruins now attest. Kurdish activists of the late 20th century have conveniently forgotten the Assyrians. During the 1980s, these activists forged alliances of convenience with extremist Armenian exile groups. Such tactics, combined with the espousal of Marxism-Leninism by young Kurdish militants, made dialogue with rational Turks more difficult at the very time when its

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<sup>1</sup>Turks penetrated from Central Asia into the area north of the Caucasus and the Black Sea much earlier. From the 6th century onward, Byzantine sources reported contacts with Turkic peoples: Khazars, Pechenegs, Cumans, and finally Seljuks. These contacts have been extensively investigated by a Hungarian scholar, Gyula Moravcsik, who published a two-volume study in 1983, *Byzantinoturcica* (Turkish Language Remnants in Byzantine Sources), E. J. Brill, Leiden. With the emergence into independence of the Turkic peoples of the former Soviet Union, we can expect a greatly increased interest in this obscure history in Turkey and elsewhere. The Turkish Historical Association has published several major source works in the past few years.

initiation might have been possible. It also deprived Kurdish extremists of international respectability.

Several simple facts about Turkey's Kurds need to be kept in mind. No more than half of them (perhaps fewer) live in the traditional Kurdish provinces of the southeast. Those that do live there have maintained the most socially and economically traditional society in Turkey; they have also been extremely conservative politically, with politics revolving around tribal and clan leaders. At the same time, Kurds have been among Turkey's most energetic internal migrators. For at least 30 years, they have been streaming into the cities in the south, center, and west of the country. Kurdish migration does not differ much from migration from other parts of the country (e.g., the Black Sea region or Central Anatolia). Kurds come to improve their economic status and to get a better education for their children. Until recently, Kurdish migrants in urban areas were seldom politically active as Kurds. In the *gecekondu* suburbs of cities such as Adana, Ankara, Istanbul, and Izmir, the assimilation of these migrants into modern Turkish life continues to accelerate. Until recently at least, there was no evidence that the sense of alienation among most Kurds was greater than among other rural groups in Turkey that migrate to cities, which means that it was quite modest.

Like other Turkish citizens, Kurds migrate abroad, too, in search of work and to accumulate capital to improve their status when they come home—perhaps to the southeast, perhaps to the cities. Kurds from the southeast constitute a significant share of Turkish laborers in Germany, where a process familiar in the history of the development of 19th and 20th century nationalism takes place: small numbers of migrants become increasingly aware of their Kurdishness and susceptible to the appeals of nationalist intellectuals, political activists, and agitators.

Kurdish self-awareness and self-assertiveness in Turkey have thus been nurtured by currents from two directions: external and internal. To make this observation is not to say that greater self-awareness among Kurds is not genuine. That is what Turks have come to realize at the opening of the 1990s. The wonder, perhaps, is that manifestations of Kurdish nationalism in Turkey were previously so weak. There was little evidence until recently that the Marxist Kurdish Workers' Party (Kurdish initials: PKK) had developed deep roots among the population. Its lack of roots drove it to use intimidation, violence, and terror as its primary techniques for getting the population to support it. One of the most interesting and important questions for the 1990s is, Will PKK militants succeed in becoming the prime spokesmen for Kurdish aspirations—whatever they may be? Turkish leaders need answers to two sets of questions: (1) How much influence has the PKK gained? Is it based on



conviction or intimidation? and (2) What do Kurds in Turkey really want? Is there anything like a consensus?

Turks know very little about their Kurds. Neither does anyone else. How many Kurds are there in Turkey? Estimates vary between 8 and 25 million. How many Kurds speak Kurdish? How many know Turkish? The high-quality Turkish censuses taken every five years provide no information about ethnic identity or language use among the population. Both Turks and foreigners were officially discouraged (and often prevented) from studying Kurds from an ethnolinguistic, sociological, economic, or political point of view.<sup>2</sup> Since the late 1950s, Turkish and foreign writers and scholars have been producing an impressive body of sociopolitical literature about communities in western and central Turkey,<sup>3</sup> but there is no comparable literature on Kurds or on sociopolitical and ethnic relations in the eastern part of the country. Foreign writing on Kurds has for the most part been superficial or partisan, and the field has, not surprisingly, come to be dominated by political propagandists and journalists.

Until recently, Turkish official policy toward Kurds was narrow and rigid. It is true, of course, that Kurds in Turkey have full conventional civil rights and that these rights have meaning (which they do not have, for the most part, in Syria, Iran, and Iraq). Large numbers of Kurds have long been active in all aspects of Turkish life, including government and the military services. Kurds have the same rights as all Turkish citizens to travel inside the country and abroad, to reside where they wish, and to be active in politics and civic organizations—but not as Kurds.

Kurds previously did not have the right to use their language anywhere but in the home or in small groups. They were forbidden to engage in cultural activities in which Kurdish songs or plays were performed or Kurdish customs were identified as Kurdish. Nothing, even linguistic studies, could be published in Kurdish. At the same time, the government encouraged naive, pseudoscholarly historical studies aimed at proving, variously, that (1) Kurds are really an ancient Turkish people who penetrated into Asia Minor two or three millennia before other Turks arrived; (2) Kurds as such do not really

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<sup>2</sup>A veritable flood of publishing about Kurds began in Turkey in 1991 and still continues. Little of what has appeared is based on serious anthropological or ethnolinguistic research. A rare exception is a book based on extensive field research by a young Turkish scholar: Lale Yalcin-Heckmann, *Tribe and Kinship among the Kurds*, Verlag Peter Lang, Frankfurt, 1991.

<sup>3</sup>A sampling of works in English includes Mahmut Makal, *A Village in Anatolia*, Vallentine, Mitchell & Co., London, 1954; John F. Kolars, *Tradition, Season and Change in a Turkish Village*, University of Chicago Press, 1963; Paul J. Magnarella, *Tradition and Change in a Turkish Town*, John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1974; Peter Benedict, *Ula, an Anatolian Town*, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1974; Kemal Karpas, *The Gecekonu, Rural Migration and Urbanization*, Cambridge University Press, 1976; Fatma Mansur, *Bodrum, a Town in the Aegean*, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1972; and June Starr, *Dispute and Settlement in Rural Turkey*, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1978.

exist; (3) Kurds are Turks who were corrupted by Iranian influences; (4) the Kurdish language is a degenerate hodgepodge that does not deserve recognition as an independent language; or (5) Kurdish is actually an ancient Turkic dialect. This "research" is offensive to both Kurdish and Turkish intellectuals and provokes an equally irrational and emotional response. Compared to the high quality of most Turkish historical and linguistic research, this pseudoscholarly writing has been an embarrassment to Turkish and Western scholars alike.<sup>4</sup>

Officially, use of the Kurdish language in administration, in courts, or for political campaigning was proscribed. Maintenance of all these restrictions was incompatible with Turkey's desire to be credited with practicing full democracy and measuring up to international standards in human rights. Fortunately, political leaders have reached consensus during the past two years, and many of the restrictions have been lifted. But the lifting has come so late that the hoped-for positive effect is not yet evident.

For too long, Turkish governments have been too ready to resort to oppression and force in Kurdish areas. PKK violence left little choice and brought out the worst in military and civil officials trying to contain it. The problem has worsened steadily since 1982. At the same time, the situation of Kurds in Iran and Iraq during the 1980s was incomparably worse than that of Kurds in Turkey. The oppression of and violence against Kurds in Iran and Iraq at various times during the past decade can justifiably be characterized as genocidal. It cannot be so characterized in Turkey. Turkey, aspiring to, and in most respects operating, an open political and social system, has been more accessible and therefore an easier target for pro-Kurdish activists in the West. Until the denouement of the Gulf War in early 1991 brought the tragic situation of Kurds in Iraq to international attention, the publicity resulting from the activities of human-rights groups in Europe and America created the widespread impression that Kurds were oppressed primarily in Turkey. The contribution of Soviet and pro-Soviet propaganda outlets in fostering this impression was substantial.

From the 1920s onward, the Soviet Union found the Kurdish issue an attractive entry point for meddling in Middle Eastern politics and at times invested considerable effort in overt and covert activities encouraging Kurdish dissidence throughout the region in which Kurds live.<sup>5</sup> This process reached a peak at the end of World War II. Frustrated in 1946 by

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<sup>4</sup>Examples include Mehmet Eroz, *Dogu Anadolunun Turkligu* (The Turkish Character of Eastern Anatolia), Turk Kultur Yayini, Istanbul, 1975; Sukru Kaya Seferoglu, *Anadolu'nun ilk Turk Sakinleri, Kurtler* (The First Turkish Inhabitants of Anatolia, the Kurds), Turkish Cultural Research Institute, Ankara, 1982; and Aydin Taneri, *Turkistanli bir Turk Boyu, Kurtler* (A Turkestani Turkish Clan, the Kurds), Turkish Cultural Research Institute, Ankara, 1983.

<sup>5</sup>I am not implying that Kurdish aspirations for accelerated economic development, cultural autonomy, and political recognition were exclusively the result of Soviet propaganda and manipulation.

the outcome of its overt efforts to encourage Kurdish separatism in Iran as a basis for gaining leverage over Kurds throughout the entire region they live in, Moscow in subsequent years made use of the relatively small Kurdish minority in the Caucasus to staff a variety of operations fostering Kurdish nationalism and dissent. There is not a great deal of evidence that broadcasts, propaganda, and agent activities had a great impact on Kurds in Turkey, but they alarmed Turkish government and military leaders and helped justify the maintenance of a highly restrictive policy. Any softening, any concessions, they feared, would be exploited by the Soviets: publications in Kurdish (which few Turks could read) would spread pro-Soviet propaganda; expressions of Kurdish culture would be turned into anti-Turkish agitation; Soviet money would flow in to support political activists and subsidize any organizations that were permitted to form. These were not groundless fears.

Kurds played a minor role in the great wave of Soviet-supported terror in Turkey in the 1970s. The basic strategy of the supporters of terror was to encourage extreme demands and violent actions by both leftists and rightists throughout Turkey, generate bitter rivalry between the two, and thus destabilize Turkish society to the point at which the political system would collapse. Comprehensive proof is lacking,<sup>6</sup> but both Turkish and Western students of this period share the hypothesis that Moscow shifted its strategy for subversion in Turkey to foster Kurdish militancy after the 1980 military takeover brought terrorism in most parts of the country to a low ebb. From the beginning, the PKK was openly Marxist. It was able to use Syria as an operational base during a period when Syria was unabashedly pro-Soviet and was receiving large amounts of Soviet military aid. PKK defectors and captives were providing evidence by the mid-1980s of Soviet links. Turkish requests, demands, and pressure could not convince Syria to put restrictions on the PKK, which continued to operate from Syria through 1991. A combination of direct diplomatic pressure and more-discreet threats of retaliation offer some promise of gaining Syrian cooperation in suppression of the PKK in 1992.

The collapse of the Soviet Union coincides with an ever widening recognition in Turkey that the republic's Kurdish policy needs to be revised. The process is now under way, but the outcome is far from clear. Fresh consideration of the status of the Kurds in Turkish society

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The fact remains, however, that Kurds have been the slowest of major Middle Eastern peoples to experience the growth of modern nationalism. Kurdish rebellions in eastern Turkey in the 1920s were manifestations of resistance by tribal leaders to imposition of central government authority and antipathy to Ataturk's secularizing reforms. The extent to which comprehensive nationalism has superseded tribal loyalties is even now far from clear.

<sup>6</sup>Information on Moscow's subversive programs in Turkey is almost certain to emerge as files are opened in Moscow and the Caucasus (Azerbaijan, e.g., which was often said to be a center of operations directed at Turkey) and knowledgeable officials begin to talk in the wake of the collapse of Soviet power.

leads inevitably to questions about the nature of the Turkish state and governmental system. The Turkish republic has been a highly centralized state. Democratization after 1950 had only limited impact on the centralized state structure. In 1991, it became possible for the first time to discuss federalism openly in Turkey as a possible alternative form of organizing the state.

Kurds are by far the most numerous but by no means the only Muslim ethnic group that has been submerged in the amalgam of modern Turkish society. There are purely Turkic groups, such as Turkmen and Yoruks. There are the Laz of the eastern Black Sea coast. They are an ancient Georgian-related subgroup—essentially the same people as the Ajars of Georgia, who were given their own “autonomous” republic in the 1920s because the majority of them were Muslim.<sup>7</sup> There are also several hundred thousand Islamicized Georgians in the interior of the northeast, many of whom still speak a dialect close to standard Georgian.<sup>8</sup>

Several million people in Turkey, living in many parts of the country, are descendants of North Caucasians and Abkhaz who came to Turkey as refugees in the great flood that followed the Russian conquest of the North Caucasus in the late 1850s and 1860s. They were augmented periodically by additional refugees from anti-Tsarist and anti-Soviet rebellions. The most numerous element in this Caucasian immigration was the Circassians, and all others have tended to be grouped together in Turkey as Circassians (*Cerkesler*). The opening up of the North Caucasus that is now occurring in the wake of the Soviet collapse and the resumption of links between Caucasian-origin Turks and their kinsmen in the Caucasus may result in a reassertion of separate identities in Turkey: Chechens, Kabardans, Karachays, Nogays, Kumyks, Lezgins, Avars, and others.

Sizable groups of Turks are descendants of refugees or returnees from Crimea and the Balkans, the most recent being Turks who fled the Bulgarian forced-assimilation campaign of the late 1980s. During Ottoman times, large numbers of Albanians and Bosnians migrated to what is today northwestern Turkey in search of greater economic opportunity. Modern Turkey may contain two to three million of their descendants. Even this listing does not exhaust all the groups that can still be identified, not far beneath the surface, in the

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<sup>7</sup>Georgian nationalists now regard them as purely Georgian and maintain that few have continued to be Muslim. Ajaria experienced some political turmoil during the first months of 1991 but has been quiet since. Though people in both Turkey and Georgia have been renewing family ties since the border was opened, there has been no evidence in either country of interest in political links, and neither country has advanced irredentist claims. See Paul B. Henze, *Turkey and Georgia*, P-7758, RAND, 1992.

<sup>8</sup>They have shown no interest in being reunited with Georgia, which has not controlled the region since the Middle Ages. In addition, they are divided from the Orthodox Christian population of Georgia by religion, having gradually converted to Islam from the 16th century onward.

population of the Turkish republic. The exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey in the 1920s brought hundreds of thousands of Greek-speaking Muslims from Greece and Crete, many of whom settled in the Aegean region, but some of whom were reestablished as far east as Cappadocia. Finally, there are the religious minorities within Islam, primarily Shi'ites, known in Turkey as *Alevi*.

Recognition of the Kurds as a distinct ethnic group with language, cultural, and political/organizational entitlements confronts Turkey with the likelihood that at least some of these other groups will also wish to assert their identity. The thought was anathema to classic Atatürkists, whose ideal was a Turkish population with little or no ethnic or religious differentiation. The Turkish elite, government officials, and the great majority of Turkish politicians accepted this concept until recently. The Demirel-Inönü coalition government that took office at the end of 1991 has with its initial policy pronouncements on the Kurds brought the country across a watershed that makes turning back to old positions impossible. During the 1990s, Turkey must develop a societal and legal order that recognizes the country's population as consisting of many strands, each entitled to some degree of identity if it so desires. The country will emerge stronger if it is successful in this endeavor.

The situation is rich with both opportunities and dangers. The experience of other countries provides lessons for Turks to ponder. Why cannot Kurds, who are scattered all over Turkey and to a significant degree have already been assimilated into the mainstream of Turkish life and politics, be granted ethnic recognition just as a broad ethnic range of American minorities has been? Why cannot other ethnic groups that wish to do so be permitted to assert themselves—even to the point of functioning as political lobbies—in the same way ethnic and interest groups have in other democratic systems? The danger to be avoided is ethnic structuralism. The examples of such failed communist states as Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union demonstrate the unwisdom of casting everything having to do with state structure and administration in ethnic terms. Federalism does not necessarily have to take ethnic form. Federalism based on regions is a far more flexible concept, one that permits automatic adjustment as rapidly developing societies change and people move from one region to another.

The idealism with which the Demirel-led government is approaching the Kurdish problem may not bring rapid results, for the coalition is weak and in constant danger of fragmenting. Nevertheless, the problem is on the political agenda and cannot be removed. Basic changes in constitutional systems should be based on broad consensus. Turks need to study other systems objectively and do a deeper analysis of the way their own system has been operating. They could weaken their state; they could greatly strengthen it and equip it

for steady progress in the 21st century. One generalization seems certain: by the year 2000, Turkey's concept of internal organization and the relationship between politics and ethnicity will be different than they are today.

## THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION

The collapse of the Soviet Union confronts Turkey with far more opportunities than problems. Economic opportunities have already been noted in the earlier section on the economy, and reduction of the military threat represented by the Soviet Union has also been mentioned. It is too early to judge, however, to what degree military developments in (or tensions between) the successor states will be a problem that Turkish military planners will have to take into account in the 1990s. Turkey has disavowed any intention of intervening militarily in interrepublican clashes in former Soviet territory,<sup>9</sup> but it is conceivable that Turkish forces will be invited by these states to play the role of peacekeepers between or within them. The most basic gain for Turkey from Soviet collapse is that it removes the pervasive "Fear of the Bear" that has overshadowed Turkish foreign policy during the entire existence of the Turkish republic.<sup>10</sup>

Generations of Turkish diplomats operated in a tradition that required almost obsequious correctness toward Moscow and fostered apprehension lest anything more than the most benign and formalistic cultural relations with the Turks and Muslims of the Soviet empire provoke Soviet retaliation.<sup>11</sup> Of course, not all Turkish diplomats and relatively few military men adhered to this pattern of behavior. Nevertheless, it often led Turkish

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<sup>9</sup>Prime Minister Demirel's warning to Azerbaijan in December 1991 to avoid escalation of tension with Armenia and his reminder that diplomatic recognition should not be interpreted as an indication that Turkey will back Azerbaijan in action against neighbors place Turkey in the position of responsible elder brother vis-a-vis the newly independent Turkic republics and could, in effect, establish a policy of support for mediation between quarreling post-Soviet nations. Demirel's remarks brought a constructive response from Azerbaijan and praise from Armenia, but as fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh has escalated and spread to Nakhichevan, Turkish leaders have had to face pressure from their own society to intervene. Responsible Turkish leaders, foremost Demirel, have continued to resist this pressure.

<sup>10</sup>On the positive side, this fear reinforced Atatürk's dictum against irredentism and developed the habit among Turks of avoiding thinking in terms of territorial expansion. This was, of course, a net gain, for irredentist agitation or continuation of the kind of intervention that occurred in the Caucasus and Central Asia by Enver Pasha and others in the years immediately after the Russian revolution would have entangled the new Turkey in unproductive adventurism and diverted energy from the all-important task of consolidating the republic.

<sup>11</sup>Turkey's then foreign minister, İtler Turkmen, in a conversation in his office in Ankara in May 1981, told me that I and others in the West who speculated that national feelings among the Turks of the Soviet Union might eventually become a problem for Moscow were quite unrealistic. Azeris and Uzbeks and all the rest, he insisted, had been turned into good Soviet citizens, pleased with the economic advantages that the Soviet system had brought them. While national feelings might still motivate some of the older generation, youth would be content to capitalize on the advantages communism had brought them, since they knew no other political or social system, and would probably be gradually Russianized.

governments to tolerate Soviet support of surrogates who sponsored anti-Turkish propaganda, training of terrorists, and subversive activities within Turkey (e.g., Palestinians, Syrians, Bulgarians, Armenian terrorists, and Kurdish Marxists). In the 1970s, it contributed to a Turkish willingness to tolerate a high degree of Soviet-sponsored subversion, including the drug trafficking and massive terrorism that came close to undermining Turks' confidence in themselves.

Republican Turkey continued and formalized the Ottoman policy of giving asylum (and rapid citizenship) to all refugees of Turkish blood from the Caucasus and both Soviet and Chinese Central Asia. These people were permitted to organize only for welfare and cultural purposes. Political organizations, information activities, and agitation of any kind were strictly proscribed. With patience and skill, determined individuals could evade some of the prohibitions, so Turks of Caucasian and Central Asian origin were able to publish journals and memoirs. A few Turkish historians and other scholars engaged in studies of these peoples and their history,<sup>12</sup> but compared to the freedom Soviet and Chinese exile activists and scholars enjoyed in Europe and America, the Turkish position until recently remained highly restrictive.

Turkey aimed to be as neutral as Switzerland as World War II threatened. After war broke out, the country remained officially neutral but tilted gradually toward the Allies. In early 1945, Turkey declared war on Germany and Japan and became a founding member of the United Nations—and thereby also an ally of the Soviet Union. These actions did not deter Stalin from making crude territorial demands both before and after the war ended, demands that drove Turkey into the Western alliance. Once in, Turkey became a strong and dependable proponent of collective security, sending troops to Korea in 1950 who distinguished themselves, and eagerly joining NATO in 1952.

Since promulgation of the Truman doctrine in February 1947 (more than 45 years ago), Turkey's highest-priority security relationship has been with the United States. In this context, Turkey has been a consistent and dependable supporter of NATO policies, has maintained troops ready for action on both the Balkan and Caucasian fronts, and has provided facilities for specialized intelligence collection aimed at Soviet targets. From the 1960s through 1990, Turkey was reticent about cooperation with the West in the Middle East, arguing that NATO obligations did not apply to threats or problems in noncommunist

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<sup>12</sup>There has been almost no scholarship in Turkey on Russian and Soviet history or Russian culture and almost no teaching of Russian or other languages of the Soviet empire. Until recently, Turkey's foreign broadcast services had no broadcasts in Russian or other languages used in the Soviet Union except Azeri, the pretense being that such broadcasts were destined only for Azeris in Iran.

areas. President Ozal reversed this policy as the Kuwait-Iraq crisis mounted in intensity in the autumn of 1990, thereby greatly benefiting Turkey's standing in the United States.

During the summer and autumn of 1991, Turkey was slow (though not as slow as the U.S. government) to recognize that Gorbachev had failed and the Soviet system was approaching terminal collapse. Once the decision to change policy was taken, implementation came fast. In September 1991, the Turkish foreign ministry sent teams of diplomats to the capital of each Soviet republic to assess political developments and the desirability of closer relations, including establishment of diplomatic posts and granting of formal recognition. Rapid action was recommended when these teams returned. In one of its last foreign-policy acts, the Motherland Party government of Mesut Yilmaz recognized Azerbaijan on 9 November.

By the end of 1991, Turkey had totally abandoned its Moscow-centered stance and embarked full force on a program of active relations with the Soviet successor states. In quick succession, the presidents of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan were welcomed by Ozal in Ankara in November and December 1991 and given promises of support and assistance. Turkey has been more cautious in dealing with the Muslim nationalities within the Russian republic that also look to Turkey for support and inspiration—e.g., the Tatars and Bashkirs, the many Muslims of the North Caucasus (of whom the Chechens are the most numerous), and the Crimean Tatars. All seek closer contacts with Turkey. Even the Gagauz of Moldavia, who are Christian Turks, have displayed a strong interest in relations with Turkey, and that interest has in some degree been reciprocated.<sup>13</sup> Turkish public interest in all these peoples has been inspired by extensive press coverage and visits of journalists and academics to their homelands.

Turkey received millions of refugees from the Caucasus and the Crimea in the 19th century, and the flow of Turkic and Muslim refugees and escapees from all parts of the Soviet Union, though slowed to a trickle from the 1950s onward, never stopped. Most of these people have assimilated well into Turkish life; but to an extent that has only recently become apparent, many have also retained recollections of their origins. The earlier rationale for restraining them and discouraging their attempts to establish contact with their kinsmen has now disappeared. An upsurge of activity of many kinds among these people must now be expected, including a proliferation of private and official contacts with the territories of their origin.

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<sup>13</sup>The Ministry of Culture, which became active in the 1970s in publication of Turkic literary classics and other writing on Turkic peoples, recently issued a thick paperback on the Gagauz: Harun Gungor and Mustafa Argunsah, *Gagauz Turkleri, Tarih, Dil, Folklor ve Halk Edebiyati* (The Gagauz Turks—History, Language, Folklore and Popular Literature), Ankara, 1991.



In terms of rewarding economic relationships, the Ukraine and Russia are likely to be as important to Turkey as the Muslim and other Caucasian republics.

Among other gains from the collapse of the Soviet Union will be the end of the residual subversive and propaganda operations that Moscow supported in Turkey until the end of the 1980s (though at a greatly reduced level after the 1970s). As KGB and Communist Party files continue to be exposed and studied and former operatives tell their stories, revelations embarrassing to Turkish Communist Party members—groups such as the Marxist-Leninist Armed Propagandists, Revolutionary Youth (*DevSol*), Armenian terrorists, and radical Arabs, as well as journalists who functioned as Soviet agents—are likely to come to light.

It is difficult to envision how any Soviet successor state other than Russia itself might find it in its interest at some future date to devote resources to resuming subversive political activity or terrorism in Turkey. Among the constructive challenges Turkish foreign policy will face during the 1990s will be to develop a relationship with Russia that overcomes 400 years of antagonism and creates a long-term basis for mutual respect and cooperation. If this relationship is to occur, Turkey will be well advised to develop at long last a corps of professional academic and governmental Russian specialists comparable to those who exist in most other Western countries.

### **THE BLACK SEA INITIATIVE**

One of the most creative initiatives Turkey undertook at the end of the 1980s was to launch a project for bringing all the countries of the Black Sea region together to expand economic relations, develop joint technical and scientific projects, monitor and control pollution, and encourage tourism and cultural exchanges. The collapse of the Soviet Union has increased the urgency of this initiative. In addition to its economic, technical, and cultural objectives, this initiative offers a framework for dealing with political and security problems that may arise among all the states of the region, including Russia. In meetings in Istanbul at the end of June 1992, formal agreements on cooperation among Black Sea states were signed. Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Central Asian leaders were also present.

### **LENIN IS DEAD, ATATURK LIVES!**

Turks have watched the collapse of the Soviet empire with awe approaching disbelief. The liberation of the Muslim republics has generated excitement and curiosity that are likely to persist. Turks now know that the road to reform and modernization Atatürk chose for them 70 years ago has stood the test of time far more successfully than Lenin's system. Lenin's statues have been pulled down throughout the former Soviet empire. Except from an occasional demagogue, Atatürk's monuments are not in danger. Atatürk's sayings retain

meaning for Turks. In times of stress, as at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, Ataturkism provided a common denominator for almost all Turks. Ataturk was, however, never deified. He has become more human as his life and work have been studied and restudied. Turks see in him a mirror image of themselves with both their strengths and their failings.

Only now, as the 20th century approaches its end, is it becoming clear in the world beyond Turkey that Ataturk would have been a much better model than Lenin for the developing world. If some of the faltering states of the Third World and the newly free ex-Soviet republics have the good fortune to find leaders with some combination of Ataturk's qualities, they will be fortunate indeed.

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